METHOD, SYSTEM AND APPARATUS FOR HANDLING ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMUNICATION SESSION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to the field of telecommunications in general and, more specifically, to a method, system and apparatus for handling establishment of a communication session.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Communication devices, such as landline telephones, wireless communication devices and voice-over-IP telephones, offer a user an ever-increasing opportunity to stay connected no matter where the user is. Generally speaking, in order to establish a communication session (for example, to place an outgoing call) the user needs to know a telephone number (or another termination identifier) associated with the destination party to initiate the outgoing call. Several communication devices are equipped with an "address book" and speed dial functionality to enable the user to record termination identifiers (such as a telephone number, for example) associated with a number of potential destination parties and to initiate the outgoing call by pressing a speed dial button or otherwise selecting a name from the address book.

[0003] With the increasing travel costs and overall pressures on businesses to control costs, more and more enterprises encourage their employees to conduct so called "virtual meetings" or, in other words, rely on telecommunication devices to conduct meetings. A "conference call" is a feature provided by telecommunication service providers or by dedicated multi-party call solutions providers that enables multiple parties to join a so-called "conference bridge" to conduct a multi-party call. A multi-party call dial-in number (usually a local access and/or a toll free number) and a multi-party call identifier are assigned to a conference bridge. A multi-party call organizer provides the multi-party call dial-in number and the multi-party call identifier to potential multi-party call participants who are to join the multi-party call. A potential multi-party call participant initiates a call using the multi-party call dial-in number and, once connected to the multi-party call provider, provides the multi-party call identifier, which allows the potential multi-party call participant to be connected to the conference bridge.

[0004] Accordingly, in order to join the multi-party call, the potential multi-party call participants need to know the multi-party call dial-in number and the multi-party call identifier. With advent of scheduling applications, such as Microsoft® Outlook® and the like, it has become customary to record the multi-party call dial-in number and the multi-party call identifier in a record maintained by the scheduling application. Even though this provides an effective means to record the information, some potential multi-party call participants may still experience an inconvenience when attempting to join the multi-party call.

[0005] Consider a scenario where a potential multi-party call participant makes use of a communication device which provides both access to a scheduling application and telephony functionality, such as a case with BlackBerry® devices provided by Research In Motion of 295 Phillip Street, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. This type of device generally enables the user to perform a single function: either check the scheduling application or use the telephony function. Even through the potential multi-party call participant can access the scheduling application and even use built-in functionality that enables the BlackBerry device to recognize the multi-party call dial-in number contained in the record in the scheduling application and initiate an outgoing call to the multi-party call dial-in number, the potential multi-party call participant still needs to find a way to remember the multi-party call identifier. The potential multi-party call participant has to either jot down the multi-party call identifier on a piece of paper or find another communication device to originate the outgoing call to the multi-party call dial-in number, while using the Black-Berry device as means to retrieve the multi-party call identifier maintained in the scheduling application.

[0006] The problem is further exacerbated when a potential multi-party call participant attempts to join a multi-party call without having access to a scheduling application. Examples of such a situation are countless, but to name a few, the potential multi-party call participant may be using a cell phone that does not provide access to a scheduling application, the potential multi-party call participant may be driving, at home and the like.

[0007] This can clearly be considered a nuisance by some users and there is clearly a need in the art for an improved manner in which a user can initiate a communication session.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] According to a first broad aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of handling establishment of a communication session. The method comprises receiving an indication of user's desire to establish the communication session. The method further comprises accessing a memory for maintaining scheduling data in an attempt to retrieve at least one call parameter associated with the communication session. The method further comprises causing the communication session to be established with a communication device associated with the user via a communication network using the at least one call parameter.

[0009] According to a second broad aspect of the present invention there is provided a system for handling establishment of a communication session. The system comprises a communication session handling entity, which is operable to receive from a user an indication of user's desire to establish the communication session. The communication session handling entity is further operable to access a memory for maintaining scheduling data in an attempt to retrieve at least one call parameter associated with the communication session. The communication session handling entity is further operable to cause the communication session to be established from a communication device associated with the user via a communication network using the at least one call parameter.

[0010] According to a third broad aspect of the present invention, there is provided an apparatus for handling establishment of a communication session. The apparatus comprises: means for receiving from a user an indication of user's desire to establish the communication session; means for accessing a memory for maintaining scheduling data in an attempt to retrieve at least one call parameter associated with the communication session; and means for causing the communication session to be established from a communication device associated with the user via a communication network using the at least one call parameter.

[0011] According to a fourth broad aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of handling establishment of one or more communication sessions. The method